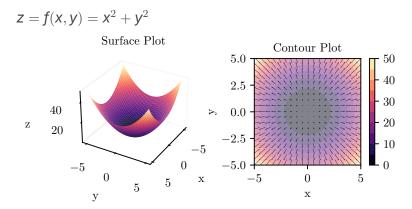
Gradient Descent

Nipun Batra

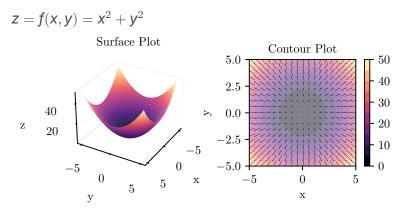
IIT Gandhinagar

August 1, 2025

Contour Plot And Gradients



Contour Plot And Gradients



Gradient denotes the direction of steepest ascent or the direction in which there is a maximum increase in f(x,y)

Contour Plot And Gradients

$$z = f(x,y) = x^{2} + y^{2}$$
Surface Plot
$$z = 40$$

$$z = 20$$

$$-5$$

$$0$$

$$5.0$$

$$2.5$$

$$0.0$$

$$-2.5$$

$$-5$$

$$0$$

$$5$$

$$0$$

$$0$$

$$0$$

$$0$$

$$0$$

$$0$$

$$0$$

Gradient denotes the direction of steepest ascent or the direction in which there is a maximum increase in f(x,y)

$$\nabla f(x,y) = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{\partial f(x,y)}{\partial x} \\ \frac{\partial f(x,y)}{\partial y} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 2x \\ 2y \end{bmatrix}$$

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• Note, here θ is the parameter vector

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- · Goal:

$$\theta^* = \underset{\theta}{\operatorname{arg\,min}} f(\theta) \tag{2}$$

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- It is a local search algorithm/greedy

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- 3. For Iteration i (i = 1, 2, ...) or until convergence:

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$$\theta_i \leftarrow \theta_{i-1} - \alpha \nabla f(\theta_{i-1})$$

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- where $abla^2 f(\mathbf{x}_0)$ is the Hessian matrix and $abla f(\mathbf{x}_0)$ is the gradient vector

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•
$$f(x) = 1 + 0(x - 0) + \frac{-1}{2!}(x - 0)^2 = 1 - \frac{x^2}{2}$$

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- First order Taylor's series approximation is given by:
- $f(x) = f(x_0) + f'(x_0)(x x_0) = 6 + 4(x 2) = 4x 2$

· We have:

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- This is equivalent to minimizing $f(\mathbf{x}_0) + \nabla f(\mathbf{x}_0)^T \Delta \mathbf{x}$

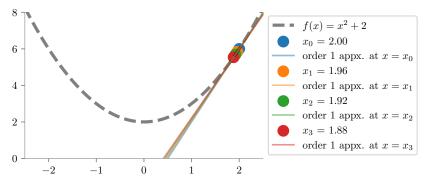
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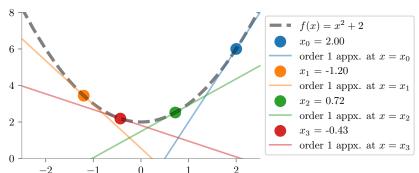
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- This happens when $\Delta \mathbf{x} = -\alpha \nabla f(\mathbf{x}_0)$ where α is a scalar
- This is the gradient descent algorithm:

$$\mathbf{x}_1 = \mathbf{x}_0 - \alpha \nabla f(\mathbf{x}_0)$$

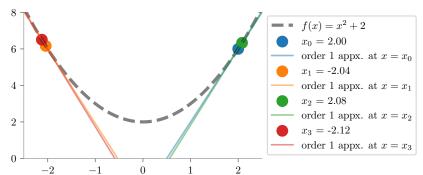
Low learning rate $\alpha = 0.01$: Converges slowly



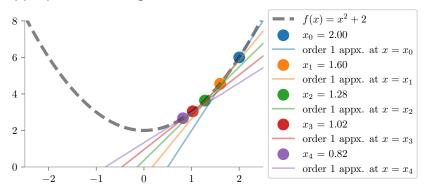
High learning rate $\alpha=0.8$: Converges quickly, but might overshoot



Very high learning rate $\alpha = 1.01$: Diverges



Appropriate learning rate $\alpha = 0.1$



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- Mean Squared Error $MSE(\theta) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} (f(x_i; \theta) y_i)^2$
- Objective function is the most general term for any function that you optimize during training.

Gradient Descent: Example

Learn $y = \theta_0 + \theta_1 x$ on following dataset, using gradient descent where initially $(\theta_0, \theta_1) = (4, 0)$ and step-size, $\alpha = 0.1$, for 2 iterations.

X	У
1	1
2	2
3	3

Gradient Descent: Example

Our predictor,
$$\hat{y} = \theta_0 + \theta_1 x$$

Error for
$$i^{th}$$
 datapoint, $\epsilon_i = y_i - \hat{y}_i$
 $\epsilon_1 = 1 - \theta_0 - \theta_1$
 $\epsilon_2 = 2 - \theta_0 - 2\theta_1$
 $\epsilon_3 = 3 - \theta_0 - 3\theta_1$

$$\mathsf{MSE} = \tfrac{\epsilon_1^2 + \epsilon_2^2 + \epsilon_3^2}{3} = \tfrac{14 + 3\theta_0^2 + 14\theta_1^2 - 12\theta_0 - 28\theta_1 + 12\theta_0\theta_1}{3}$$

Difference between SSE and MSE

 $\sum \epsilon_{\mathbf{i}}^2$ increases as the number of examples increase

So, we use MSE

$$MSE = \frac{1}{n} \sum \epsilon_i^2$$

Here n denotes the number of samples

Gradient Descent: Example

$$\tfrac{\partial \operatorname{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0} = \tfrac{2\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \theta_0 - \theta_1 x_i)(-1)}{n} = \tfrac{2\sum_{i=1}^n \epsilon_i(-1)}{n}$$

$$\tfrac{\partial \operatorname{MSE}}{\partial \theta_1} = \tfrac{2 \sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \theta_0 - \theta_1 X_i) (-X_i)}{n} = \tfrac{2 \sum_{i=1}^n \epsilon_i (-X_i)}{n}$$

Gradient Descent : Example

$$\theta_0 = \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial \mathit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0}$$

$$\theta_1 = \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial \mathit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_1}$$

Gradient Descent: Example

$$\begin{split} \theta_0 &= \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial \textit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0} \\ \theta_0 &= 4 - 0.2 \frac{((1 - (4 + 0))(-1) + (2 - (4 + 0))(-1) + (3 - (4 + 0))(-1))}{3} \\ \theta_0 &= 3.6 \\ \theta_1 &= \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial \textit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_1} \end{split}$$

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Gradient Descent : Example

$$\theta_0 = \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial MSE}{\partial \theta_0}$$

$$\theta_1 = \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial MSE}{\partial \theta_1}$$

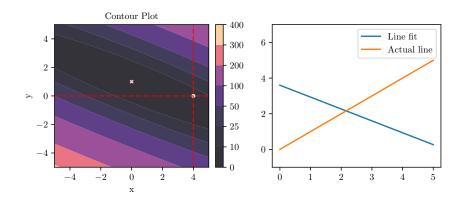
Gradient Descent: Example

$$\begin{split} \theta_0 &= \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial \text{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0} \\ \theta_0 &= 3.6 - \\ 0.2 \frac{((1 - (3.6 - 0.67))(-1) + (2 - (3.6 - 0.67 \times 2))(-1) + (3 - (3.6 - 0.67 \times 3))(-1))}{3} \\ \theta_0 &= 3.54 \\ \theta_1 &= \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial \text{MSE}}{\partial \theta_1} \end{split}$$

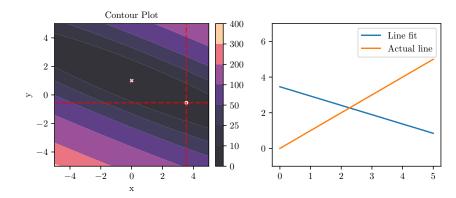
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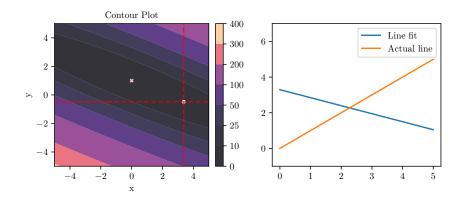
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 0)



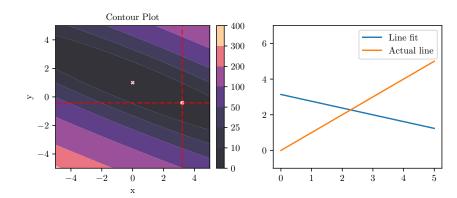
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 2)



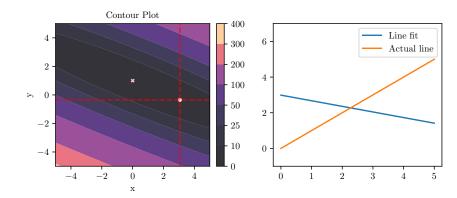
Gradient Descent : Example (Iteraion 4)



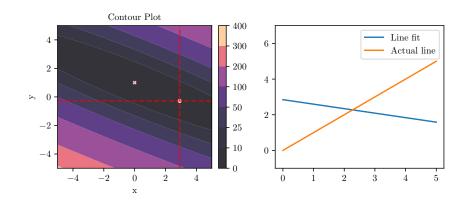
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 6)



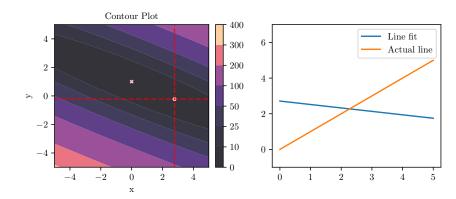
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 8)



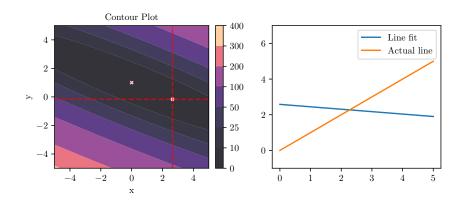
Gradient Descent : Example (Iteraion 10)



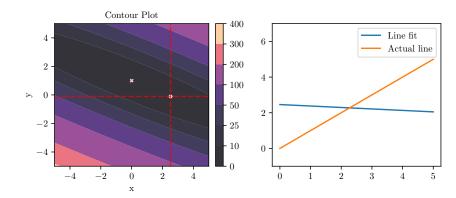
Gradient Descent : Example (Iteraion 12)



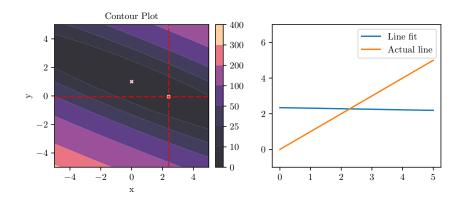
Gradient Descent : Example (Iteraion 14)



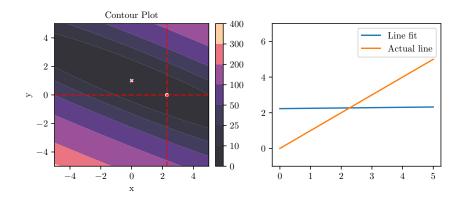
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 16)



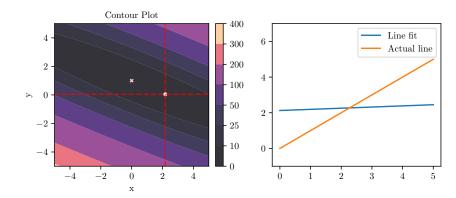
Gradient Descent : Example (Iteraion 18)



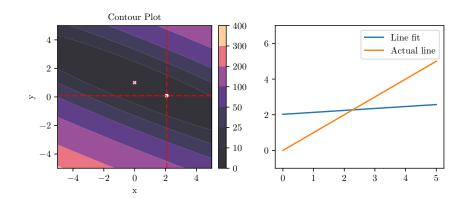
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 20)



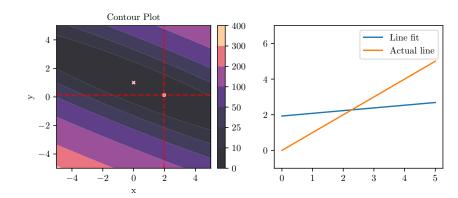
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 22)



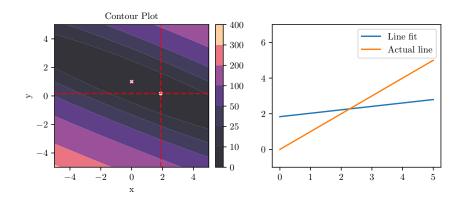
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 24)



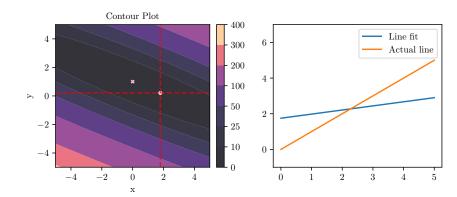
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 26)



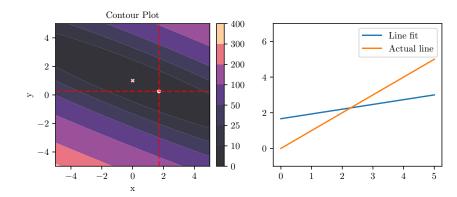
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 28)



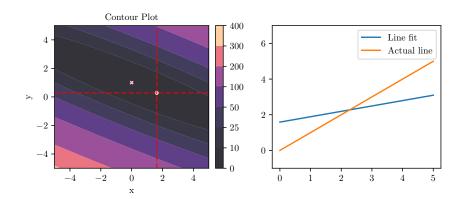
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 30)



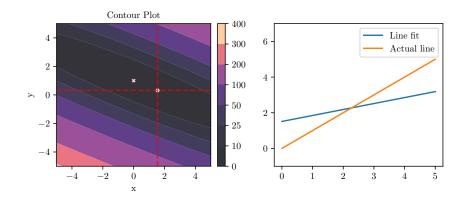
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 32)



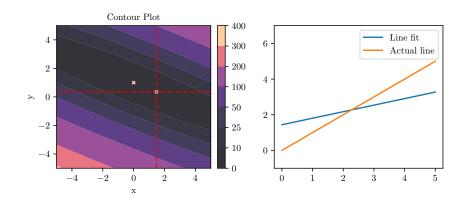
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 34)



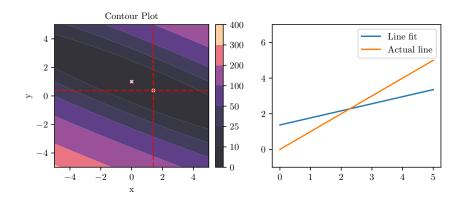
Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 36)



Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 38)



Gradient Descent: Example (Iteraion 40)



Iteration vs Epochs for gradient descent

Iteration: Each time you update the parameters of the model

Iteration vs Epochs for gradient descent

- Iteration: Each time you update the parameters of the model
- Epoch: Each time you have seen all the set of examples

• Dataset: $\mathcal{D} = \{(\mathbf{X}, \mathbf{y})\}$ of size n

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 - $\quad \quad \circ \ \, \mathsf{Predict} \ \hat{\mathbf{y}} = \mathsf{pred}(\mathbf{X}, \boldsymbol{\theta})$

- Dataset: $\mathcal{D} = \{(\mathbf{X}, \mathbf{y})\}$ of size n
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- For epoch *e* in [1, *E*]
 - Predict $\hat{\mathbf{y}} = \mathsf{pred}(\mathbf{X}, \boldsymbol{\theta})$
 - Compute loss: $J(\theta) = \mathsf{loss}(\mathbf{y}, \hat{\mathbf{y}})$

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- For epoch *e* in [1, *E*]
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- For epoch e in [1, E]
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 - Update: $\theta = \theta \alpha \nabla J(\theta)$

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 - $_{\circ}$ Shuffle ${\cal D}$

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 - \circ For i in [1, n]

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- Initialize θ
- For epoch *e* in [1, *E*]
 - $_{\circ}$ Shuffle ${\cal D}$
 - For *i* in [1, *n*]
 - Predict $\hat{\mathbf{y}}_i = \mathsf{pred}(\mathbf{x}_i, \boldsymbol{\theta})$

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Mini-Batch Gradient Descent (MBGD)

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 - Batches = make_batches(D, B)

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Stochastic Gradient Descent

- In SGD, we update parameters after seeing each each point
- Noisier curve for iteration vs cost
- For a single update, it computes the gradient over one example. Hence lesser time

Learn $y=\theta_0+\theta_1x$ on following dataset, using SGD where initially $(\theta_0,\theta_1)=(4,0)$ and step-size, $\alpha=0.1$, for 1 epoch (3 iterations).

Х	У
2	2
3	3
1	1

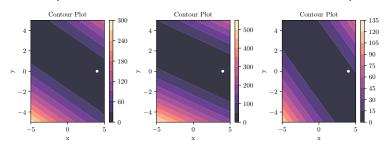
Our predictor,
$$\hat{y} = \theta_0 + \theta_1 x$$

Error for
$$i^{th}$$
 datapoint, $e_i = y_i - \hat{y}_i$
 $\epsilon_1 = 2 - \theta_0 - 2\theta_1$
 $\epsilon_2 = 3 - \theta_0 - 3\theta_1$
 $\epsilon_3 = 1 - \theta_0 - \theta_1$

While using SGD, we compute the MSE using only 1 datapoint per iteration.

So MSE is ϵ_1^2 for iteration 1 and ϵ_2^2 for iteration 2.

Contour plot of the cost functions for the three datapoints



For Iteration i

$$\frac{\partial \textit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0} = 2 \left(\mathbf{y}_i - \theta_0 - \theta_1 \mathbf{x}_i \right) (-1) = 2\epsilon_i \left(-1 \right)$$

$$\frac{\partial MSE}{\partial \theta_1} = 2 \left(y_i - \theta_0 - \theta_1 X_i \right) \left(-X_i \right) = 2\epsilon_i \left(-X_i \right)$$

$$\theta_0 = \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial \mathit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0}$$

$$\theta_1 = \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial MSE}{\partial \theta_1}$$

$$\begin{split} \theta_0 &= \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial \text{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0} \\ \theta_0 &= 4 - 0.1 \times 2 \times (2 - (4 + 0)) \, (-1) \\ \theta_0 &= 3.6 \\ \theta_1 &= \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial \text{MSE}}{\partial \theta_1} \end{split}$$

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$$\begin{split} \theta_0 &= \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial \textit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0} \\ \theta_0 &= 3.6 - 0.1 \times 2 \times (3 - (3.6 - 0.8 \times 3)) \, (-1) \\ \theta_0 &= 3.96 \\ \theta_1 &= \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial \textit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_1} \end{split}$$

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$$\theta_0 = \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial \mathit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0}$$

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$$\begin{split} \theta_0 &= \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial \textit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0} \\ \theta_0 &= 3.96 - 0.1 \times 2 \times (1 - (3.96 + 0.28 \times 1)) \, (-1) \\ \theta_0 &= 3.312 \\ \theta_1 &= \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial \textit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_1} \end{split}$$

$$\begin{split} &\theta_0 = \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial \textit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_0} \\ &\theta_0 = 3.96 - 0.1 \times 2 \times \left(1 - (3.96 + 0.28 \times 1)\right) (-1) \\ &\theta_0 = 3.312 \\ &\theta_1 = \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial \textit{MSE}}{\partial \theta_1} \\ &\theta_0 = 0.28 - 0.1 \times 2 \times \left(1 - (3.96 + 0.28 \times 1)\right) (-1) \\ &\theta_1 = -0.368 \end{split}$$

Based on Estimation Theory and Machine Learning by Florian Hartmann

• Let us say we have a dataset $\mathcal D$ containing input output pairs $\{(x_1,y_1),(x_2,y_2),\dots,(x_N,y_N)\}$

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$$L(\theta) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} loss(f(x_i, \theta), y_i)$$

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 loss can be any loss function such as squared loss, cross-entropy loss etc.

$$loss(f(x_i, \theta), y_i) = (f(x_i, \theta) - y_i)^2$$

· The true gradient of the loss function is given by:

$$\nabla L = \nabla \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \log (f(x_i), y_i)$$
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 The above is a consequence of linearity of the gradient operator.

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- Let us say we have a sample: (x, y)
- The estimated gradient is given by:

$$\nabla \tilde{L} = \nabla \operatorname{loss}(f(x),y)$$

Bias of the estimator

• One measure for the quality of an estimator \tilde{X} is its bias or how far off its estimate is on average from the true value X:

$$\mathrm{bias}(X) = \mathbb{E}[\tilde{X}] - X$$

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 Using the rules of expectation, we can show that the expected value of the estimated gradient is the true gradient:

$$\mathbb{E}[\nabla \tilde{L}] = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{1}{n} \nabla \log (f(x_i), y_i)$$
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 One measure for the quality of an estimator X is its bias or how far off its estimate is on average from the true value X:

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 Thus, the estimated gradient is an unbiased estimator of the true gradient

• Consider $\mathbf{X} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times d}$

- Consider $\mathbf{X} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times d}$
- *n* examples and *d* dimensions

- Consider $\mathbf{X} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times d}$
- n examples and d dimensions
- What is the time complexity of solving the normal equation $\hat{\theta} = (\mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{X})^{-1} \mathbf{X}^T \mathbf{y}$?

• X has dimensions $n \times d$, X^T has dimensions $d \times n$

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- Scales cubic in the number of columns/features of X

Start with random values of θ_0 and θ_1 Till convergence

•
$$\theta_0 = \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta_0} (\sum \epsilon_i^2)$$

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- Question: Can you write the above for d dimensional data in vectorised form?

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 Question: Can you write the above for d dimensional data in vectorised form?

•
$$\theta_0 = \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta_0} (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})^\top (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})$$

 $\theta_1 = \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta_1} (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})^\top (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})$
:
:
 $\theta_d = \theta_d - \alpha \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta_d} (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})^\top (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})$

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 Question: Can you write the above for d dimensional data in vectorised form?

•
$$\theta_0 = \theta_0 - \alpha \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta_0} (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})^\top (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})$$

 $\theta_1 = \theta_1 - \alpha \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta_1} (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})^\top (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})$
:
 $\theta_d = \theta_d - \alpha \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta_d} (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})^\top (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})$
• $\theta = \theta - \alpha \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})^\top (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\theta})$

$$\begin{split} & \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X} \boldsymbol{\theta})^{\top} (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X} \boldsymbol{\theta}) \\ &= \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (\mathbf{y}^{\top} - \boldsymbol{\theta}^{\top} \mathbf{X}^{\top}) (\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{X} \boldsymbol{\theta}) \\ &= \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (\mathbf{y}^{\top} \mathbf{y} - \boldsymbol{\theta}^{\top} \mathbf{X}^{\top} \mathbf{y} - \mathbf{y}^{\top} \mathbf{X} \boldsymbol{\theta} + \boldsymbol{\theta}^{\top} \mathbf{X}^{\top} \mathbf{X} \boldsymbol{\theta}) \\ &= -2 \mathbf{X}^{\top} \mathbf{y} + 2 \mathbf{X}^{\top} \mathbf{X} \boldsymbol{\theta} \\ &= 2 \mathbf{X}^{\top} (\mathbf{X} \boldsymbol{\theta} - \mathbf{y}) \end{split}$$

We can write the vectorised update equation as follows, for each iteration $\theta = \theta - \alpha \mathbf{X}^{\top} (\mathbf{X} \theta - \mathbf{y})$

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Hint, rewrite the above as: $\theta = \theta - \alpha \mathbf{X}^{\mathsf{T}} \mathbf{X} \theta + \alpha \mathbf{X}^{\mathsf{T}} \mathbf{y}$

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All of the above need only be calculated once!

For each of the t iterations, we now need to first multiply $\alpha \mathbf{X}^{\top} \mathbf{X}$ with $\boldsymbol{\theta}$ which is matrix multiplication of a $d \times d$ matrix with a $d \times 1$, which is $\mathcal{O}(d^2)$

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$$\mathcal{O}(td^2) + \mathcal{O}(d^2n) = \mathcal{O}((t+n)d^2)$$

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